

# Aleister Crowley

Aleister Crowley	
Aleister Crowley in ceremonial garb.	
Born	Edward Alexander Crowley 12 October 1875 Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, England
Died	1 December 1947 (aged 72) Hastings, East Sussex, England
Occupation	Occultist, poet, novelist
Spouse(s)	Rose Edith Kelly
Parents	Edward Crowley, Emily Bertha Crowley (née Bishop)

**Aleister Crowley** (/ˈkroʊli/ ***KROH**-lee*; 12 October 1875 – 1 December 1947), born **Edward Alexander Crowley**, and also known as both **Frater Perdurabo** and **The Great Beast 666**, was an English occultist, mystic, ceremonial magician, poet and mountaineer, who was responsible for founding the religious philosophy of Thelema. In his role as the founder of the Thelemite philosophy, he came to see himself as the prophet who was entrusted with informing humanity that it was entering the new Aeon of Horus in the early 20th century.

Born into a wealthy upper-class family, as a young man he became a member of the esoteric Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Subsequently he claimed that he was contacted by his Holy Guardian Angel, an entity he named Aiwass, while staying in Egypt in 1904, and that he 'received' a text known as *The Book of the Law* from what he claimed was a divine source, and around which he would come to develop his new philosophy of Thelema. He would go on to found his own occult society, the A.∴A.∴ and eventually rose to become a leader of Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), before founding a religious commune in Cefalù known as the Abbey of Thelema, which he led from 1920 until 1923. After abandoning the Abbey amid widespread opposition, Crowley returned to Britain, where he continued to promote Thelema until his death.

Crowley was also bisexual, a recreational drug experimenter and a social critic. In many of these roles he "was in revolt against the moral and religious values of his time", espousing a form of libertinism based upon the rule of "Do What Thou Wilt".<sup>[1]</sup> Because of this, he gained widespread notoriety during his lifetime, and was denounced in the popular press of the day as "the wickedest man in the world".

Crowley has remained an influential figure and is widely thought of as the most influential occultist of all time. In 2002, a BBC poll described him as being the seventy-third greatest Briton of all time.<sup>[2]</sup> References to him can be found in the works of numerous writers, musicians and filmmakers,<sup>[3]</sup> and he has also been cited as a key influence on many later esoteric groups and individuals, including Kenneth Grant, Kenneth Anger, Jack Parsons, Gerald Gardner, Robert Anton Wilson and, to some degree, Austin Osman Spare.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Early life

### Childhood: 1875–1894

Aleister was born as Edward Alexander Crowley at 30 Clarendon Square in Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, England, between 11 pm and midnight on 12 October 1875.<sup>[5][6]</sup> His father, Edward Crowley (*c.*1830–1887), was trained as an engineer but, according to Aleister, never worked as one, instead owning shares in a lucrative family brewing business, Crowley's Alton Ales, which allowed him to retire before Aleister was born.<sup>[7][8]</sup> His mother, Emily Bertha Bishop (1848–1917), drew roots from a Devonshire-Somerset family and was despised by her son,

whom she described as "the Beast", a name that he revelled in.<sup>[9][10]</sup> The couple had been married at Kensington Registry Office in London during November 1874.<sup>[11]</sup>

The Crowley family were Christian; Aleister's father had been born a Quaker, but had converted to the Exclusive Brethren, a more conservative faction of a denomination known as the Plymouth Brethren. Upon marriage, Emily had also converted to the Exclusive Brethren. Aleister's father was particularly devout, spending his time as a travelling preacher for the sect and reading a chapter from the Bible to his wife and son after breakfast every day.<sup>[12][13]</sup> Aged 8, Aleister was sent to H.T. Habershon's evangelical Christian boarding school in Hastings, and then to a preparatory school in Cambridge run by the Reverend Henry d'Arcy Champney, whom Aleister considered a sadist.<sup>[14]</sup>

On 5 March 1887, when Crowley was 11, his father died of tongue cancer. Aleister would describe this as a turning point in his life,<sup>[15][16]</sup> and he always maintained some admiration for his father, describing him as "his hero and his friend".<sup>[17]</sup> Inheriting his father's wealth, he was subsequently sent to Ebor School in Cambridge, a private Plymouth Brethren school, but was expelled for misbehaviour.<sup>[18]</sup> Following this he attended Malvern College and then Tonbridge School, both of which he despised and soon left after only a few terms, instead beginning studies at Eastbourne College.<sup>[19][20][21]</sup> He became increasingly sceptical about Christianity, pointing out what he perceived as inconsistencies in the Bible to his religious teachers,<sup>[22][23]</sup> and went against the Christian morality of his upbringing, for instance embracing sex both with girls whom he met and by visiting female prostitutes, including one from whom he contracted gonorrhea.<sup>[24][25]</sup>

For many years I had loathed being called Alick, partly because of the unpleasant sound and sight of the word, partly because it was the name by which my mother called me. Edward did not seem to suit me and the diminutives Ted or Ned were even less appropriate. Alexander was too long and Sandy suggested tow hair and freckles. I had read in some book or other that the most favourable name for becoming famous was one consisting of a dactyl followed by a spondee, as at the end of a hexameter: like *Jeremy Taylor*. Aleister Crowley fulfilled these conditions and Aleister is the Gaelic form of Alexander. To adopt it would satisfy my romantic ideals.

Aleister Crowley, on his name change.<sup>[26]</sup>

## Cambridge University: 1895–1897

In 1895 Crowley, who soon adopted the new name of Aleister over his birth name of Edward, began a three year course at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he was entered for the Moral Science Tripos studying philosophy, but with approval from his personal tutor he switched to English literature, which was not then a part of the curriculum offered.<sup>[27][28][29]</sup> Crowley largely spent his time at university engaged in his pastimes, one of which was mountaineering; he went on holiday to the Alps to do so every year from 1894 to 1898, and various other mountaineers who knew him at this time recognised him as "a promising climber, although somewhat erratic".<sup>[30]</sup> Another of his hobbies was writing poetry, which he had been doing since the age of 10, and in 1898 he privately published one hundred copies of one of his poems, *Aceldama*, but it was not a particular success.<sup>[31]</sup>

That same year he published a string of other poems, the most notable of which was *White Stains*, a piece of erotica that had to be printed abroad as a safety measure in case it caused trouble with the British authorities.<sup>[32]</sup> Part of this work, according to biographer Lawrence Sutin, "deserves a place in any wide-ranging anthology of gay poetry".<sup>[33]</sup> A third hobby of his was the game of chess, and he joined the university's chess club, where, he later stated, he beat the president in his first year and practised two hours a day towards becoming a champion, but he eventually gave this idea up.<sup>[34]</sup>

It was while on a winter holiday in Sweden in December 1896 that he had his first significant mystical experience.<sup>[35][36]</sup> Several later biographers, including Lawrence Sutin and Tobias Churton, believed that this was the result of Crowley's first homosexual experience.<sup>[36][37]</sup>

At university, he also maintained a vigorous sex life, which was largely conducted with prostitutes and girls he picked up at local pubs and cigar shops, but eventually he took part in same-sex activities including receptive anal

sex.<sup>[38]</sup> This was despite the fact that homosexual acts were illegal and punishable with imprisonment at that time. In 1897, Crowley met a man named Herbert Charles Pollitt, the president of the Cambridge University Footlights Dramatic Club, and the two entered into a relationship but broke up because Pollitt did not share Crowley's increasing interest in the esoteric.<sup>[39][40]</sup> Crowley himself later stated that "I told him frankly that I had given my life to religion and that he did not fit into the scheme. I see now how imbecile I was, how hideously wrong and weak it is to reject any part of one's personality."<sup>[41]</sup> In October a brief illness triggered considerations of mortality and "the futility of all human endeavour", or at least the futility of the diplomatic career that Crowley had previously considered,<sup>[42]</sup> and instead, he decided to devote his life to the occult. In 1897 he left Cambridge, not having taken any degree at all despite a "first class" showing in his spring 1897 exams and consistent "second class honours" results before that.<sup>[43]</sup> That summer, he then travelled to St Petersburg in Russia; later biographers Richard Spence and Tobias Churton suggested that Crowley had done so under the employ of the British secret service, but this remains inconclusive.<sup>[44][45]</sup>



Aleister Crowley, in Golden Dawn uniform

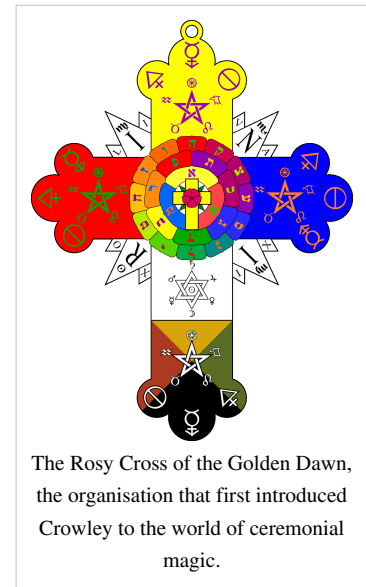
### The Golden Dawn: 1898–1899

In 1898, Crowley was staying in Zermatt, Switzerland, where he met the chemist Julian L. Baker, and the two began talking about their common interest in alchemy. Upon their return to England, Baker introduced Crowley to George Cecil Jones, a member of the occult society known as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which had been founded in 1888. Crowley was subsequently initiated into the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn on 18 November 1898 by the group's leader, Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers (1854–1918). The ceremony itself took place at Mark Masons Hall in London, where Crowley accepted his motto and magical name of "Fratr Perdurabo", a Latin term meaning "Brother I shall endure to the end".<sup>[46][47]</sup>

Crowley moved from the elegant accommodation at the Hotel Cecil to his own luxury flat at 67–69 Chancery Lane. He soon invited a Golden Dawn associate, Allan Bennett (1872–1923), to live with him, and Bennett became his personal tutor, teaching him more about ceremonial magic and the ritual usage of drugs.<sup>[48]</sup> In 1899 Crowley acquired Boleskine House in Foyers on the shore of Loch Ness in Scotland. He subsequently developed a love of Scottish culture, describing himself as the "Laird of Boleskine" and took to wearing traditional highland dress, even during visits back to London.<sup>[49]</sup>

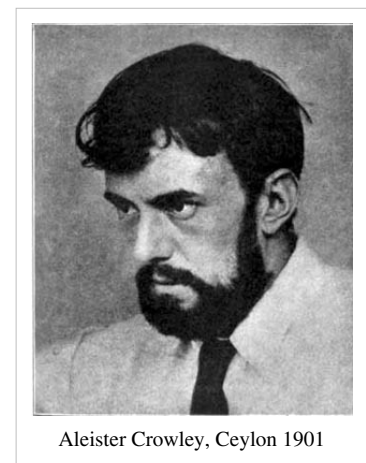
However, a schism had developed in the Golden Dawn, with MacGregor Mathers, the organisation's leader, being ousted by a group of members who were unhappy with his autocratic rule. Crowley had previously approached this group of rebels, asking to be initiated into the further orders of the Golden Dawn, but they had declined him. Unfazed, he went directly to Mathers, who still held the post of chief and who agreed to initiate him into the Second Order.<sup>[50]</sup> Now loyal to Mathers, Crowley (with the help of his then mistress and fellow initiate Elaine Simpson) attempted to help crush the rebellion and unsuccessfully tried to seize a London temple space known as the Vault of Rosenkreutz from the rebels.<sup>[51]</sup>

Crowley had also developed personal feuds with some of the Golden Dawn's members; he disliked the poet W.B. Yeats, who had been one of the rebels, because Yeats had not been particularly favourable towards one of his own poems, *Jephthah*.<sup>[52]</sup> He also disliked Arthur Edward Waite, who would rouse the anger of his fellows at the Golden Dawn with his pedantry.<sup>[53]</sup> Crowley voiced the view that Waite was a pretentious bore through searing critiques of Waite's writings and editorials of other authors' writings. In his periodical *The Equinox*, Crowley titled one diatribe, "Wisdom While You Waite", and his mock-obituary on the passing of Waite bore the title "Dead Waite".<sup>[54]</sup>



### Mexico, India and Paris: 1900–1903

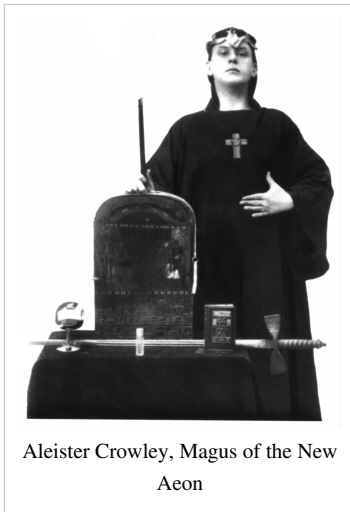
In 1900, Crowley travelled to Mexico via the United States on a whim, taking a local woman as his mistress, and with his good friend Oscar Eckenstein (1859–1921) proceeded to climb several mountains, including Iztaccihuatl, Popocatepetl and even Colima, the latter of which they had to abandon owing to a volcanic eruption.<sup>[55]</sup> During this period, Eckenstein revealed mystical leanings of his own and told Crowley that he needed to improve the control of his mind, recommending the Indian practice of raja yoga in order to do so. Crowley had continued his magical experimentation on his own after leaving Mathers and the Golden Dawn, and his writings suggest that he developed the magical word *Abrahadabra* during this time.<sup>[56]</sup>



Leaving Mexico, a country that he would always remain fond of, Crowley visited San Francisco, Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong and Ceylon, where he met up with Allan Bennett and devoted himself further to yoga, from which he claimed to have achieved the spiritual state of *dhyana*. It was during this visit that Bennett decided to become a Buddhist monk in the Theravada tradition, travelling to Burma, while Crowley went on to India, studying various Hindu practices.<sup>[57]</sup> In 1902, he was joined in India by Eckenstein and several other mountaineers; Guy Knowles, H. Pfannl, V. Wesseley, and Dr Jules Jacot-Guillarmod. Together the Eckenstein-Crowley expedition attempted to climb K2. On the journey, Crowley was afflicted with influenza, malaria, and snow blindness, while other expedition members were similarly struck with illness. They reached an altitude of 20,000 feet (6,100 m) before deciding to turn back.<sup>[58]</sup>

In 1903 Crowley wed Rose Edith Kelly, the sister of his friend, the painter Gerald Festus Kelly, in a "marriage of convenience". However, soon after their marriage, Crowley actually fell in love with her and set about to successfully prove his affections.<sup>[59]</sup> Gerald Kelly was a good friend of W. Somerset Maugham, who after briefly meeting Crowley would later use him as a model for the protagonist of his novel *The Magician*, published 1908.<sup>[60][61]</sup>

## Developing Thelema



Aleister Crowley, Magus of the New Aeon

### Egypt and *The Book of the Law*: 1904

In 1904, Crowley and his new wife Rose travelled to Egypt using the pseudonym of Prince and Princess Chioa Khan, titles which Crowley claimed had been bestowed upon him by an eastern potentate.<sup>[62]</sup> According to Crowley's own account, Rose, who was pregnant, began to experience visions while in the country, regularly informing him that "they are waiting for you", but not providing him with any further information as to who "they" were. It was on 18 March, after Crowley sought the aid of the Egyptian god Thoth in a magical rite, that she actually revealed who "they" were – the ancient Egyptian god Horus and his alleged messenger. She then led him to a nearby museum in Cairo where she showed him a seventh century BCE mortuary stele known as the Stele of Ankh-ef-en-Khonsu (it later came to be revered in Thelema as the "Stele of Revealing"); Crowley was astounded for the exhibit's number was 666, the number of the beast in Christian belief.<sup>[63]</sup> Crowley took this all to be a sign from a divine entity and on 20 March began performing ritual invocations of the god Horus in his rented room. It was after this invocation that Rose, or as he now referred to her, Ouarda the Seeress, informed him that "the Equinox of the Gods had come".<sup>[64]</sup>

Had! The manifestation of Nuit.

The unveiling of the company of heaven.

Every man and woman is a star.

Every number is infinite; there is no difference.

Help me, o warrior lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men!

The opening lines of *The Book of the Law*.

It was on 8 April, when the couple were still staying in Cairo, that Crowley claimed he heard a disembodied voice talking to him, claiming that it was coming from a being Crowley named as Aiwass the Minister of Hoor-Paar-Kraat. Crowley's disciple and later secretary Israel Regardie believed that this voice came from Crowley's subconscious, but opinions among Thelemites differ widely.<sup>[65]</sup> Crowley said that he wrote down everything the voice told him over the course of the next three days, and subsequently titled it *Liber AL vel Legis* or *The Book of the Law*.<sup>[66][67]</sup> In the preface to the Book of the Law, Crowley explains that the ideas presented within the book are symbolized by Egyptian Gods for 'literary convenience'. The Book declares that a new Aeon for mankind had begun, and that Crowley would serve as its prophet. As a supreme moral law, Nuit declared "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law", and that people should learn to live in tune with their "True Will". The story goes that although this event would prove to be a cornerstone in Crowley's life, being the origin of the philosophy of Thelema, he claimed at the time he was unsure what to think about the whole situation. He wrote that he was "dumbfounded about what to do with *The Book of the Law*" and eventually decided to ignore the instructions that it commanded him to perform, which included taking the Stele of Revealing from the museum, fortifying his own island and translating the Book into all the world's languages. Instead he simply sent typescripts of the work to several occultists whom he knew, and then "put aside the book with relief".<sup>[68]</sup>

## Kangchenjunga and China: 1905–1906

Returning to Boleskine, Crowley came to believe, for reasons that are documented in Crowley's diaries, that his former friend Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers had become so jealous of his progression as a ceremonial magician that he had begun using magic against him, and the relationship between the two broke down.<sup>[69]</sup> On 28 July 1905, Rose gave birth to Crowley's first child, a daughter, whom he named Nuit Ma Ahathoor Hecate Sappho Jezebel Lilith, although she would commonly be referred to simply by her last name.<sup>[70]</sup> He also founded a publishing company, naming it the Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth in parody of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and through this released more of his own poetry, including *The Sword of Song*.<sup>[71]</sup> While his poetry often received strong reviews (either positive or negative), it never sold well, and attempting to gain more publicity, he issued a reward of £100 for whomever could write the best essay on the topic of his work. The winner of this would prove to be J.F.C. Fuller (1878–1966), a British Army officer and military historian, whose essay, *The Star in the West*, heralded Crowley's poetry as some of the greatest ever written.<sup>[72]</sup>

Crowley decided to climb another of the world's greatest mountains, Kangchenjunga in the Himalayas, widely thought of as "the most treacherous mountain in the world" by climbers at the time. Assembling a team consisting of Dr Jacot-Guillarmod, a veteran of the K2 climb, as well as several other continental Europeans including Charles Adolphe Reymond, Alexis Pache and Alceste C. Rigo de Righi, the group travelled to British India to undertake the task. Throughout the expedition, there was much argument between Crowley and the others who felt that he was reckless. They eventually mutinied against Crowley's control, with the other climbers heading back down the mountain as nightfall approached despite Crowley's warnings that it was too dangerous. Crowley was proved right as Pache and several porters were subsequently killed in an accident.<sup>[73]</sup>



Returning from this expedition, he met up with Rose and Lilith in Kolkata before being forced to leave India after shooting dead a native who had tried to mug him.<sup>[74]</sup> Travelling to China, Crowley soon fell down a forty foot cliff; finding himself unscathed, he said he believed that he was being protected for some prophetic purpose, and underwent a religious experience that he felt bestowed on him the rank of Exempt Adept, the highest grade of the Second Order of the Golden Dawn. Devoting himself fully to spiritual and magical work, he began studying the *Goetia*, and recited the grimoire's preliminary invocation daily in order to try to get in contact with his Holy Guardian Angel. The Crowleys spent the next few months travelling around China, but it was decided that in March 1906, they would return to Britain.<sup>[75]</sup>

Rose took Lilith with her and set off for Europe via India, while Crowley himself decided to travel back via the United States, where he hoped he would be able to get support for a second expedition to Kangchenjunga. Before departing, Crowley visited a significant lover and 'Scarlet Woman' Elaine Simpson in Shanghai. She was a fellow occultist who had been his colleague in the Golden Dawn. She was fascinated by *The Book of the Law* and the apparent prophetic message that it contained, and together they performed a ritual to invoke Aiwass once more. Inspired by the text, Simpson acted as a psychic medium and told Crowley that Aiwass wanted him to "Return to Egypt, with same surroundings. There I will give thee signs." Nonetheless, Crowley ignored the advice of Simpson, instead heading off to America. Stopping off at the Japanese port of Kobe along the way, Crowley had a vision which he interpreted as meaning that the great spiritual beings known as the Secret Chiefs had admitted him into the Third Order of the Golden Dawn. Subsequently arriving in America, he found no support for his proposed mountaineering expedition, and so set sail to return to Britain, arriving there in June 1906.<sup>[76]</sup>



## The A∴A∴ and the Holy Books of Thelema: 1907–1910

Upon arrival at Britain, Crowley learned that his daughter Lilith had died of typhoid in Rangoon and that his wife had begun suffering from alcoholism. Heartbroken, his health began to suffer, and he underwent a series of surgical operations. He began having a short-lived sexual affair with Vera "Lola" Stepp, an actress to whom he would devote some of his poetry, while Rose gave birth to his second daughter, Lola Zaza,<sup>[77]</sup> for whom Crowley devised a special ritual of thanksgiving.<sup>[78]</sup>

Into my loneliness comes --

The sound of a flute in dim groves that haunt the uttermost hills.

Even from the brave river they reach to the edge of the wilderness.

And I behold Pan.

The opening lines of of Liber VII (1907), the first of the Holy Books of Thelema to be revealed to Crowley after *The Book of the Law*.<sup>[79]</sup>

Saying that he believed that he was now amongst the highest level of spiritual adepts, Crowley began to think about founding his own magical society. In this he was supported by his friend and fellow occultist George Cecil Jones. The pair began to practice rituals together at Jones' home in Coulsdon, and for the autumn equinox on 22 September 1907 developed a new ceremony based upon the Golden Dawn initiatory rite, for which Crowley composed a verse liturgy entitled "Liber 671", and later dubbed "Liber Pyramidos". The pair repeated this ritual again on 9 October, when they had made some alterations to it. In Crowley's eyes, this ritual would prove to be one of the "greatest events of his career" during which he "attained the knowledge and conversation of his holy guardian angel" and "entered the trance of *samadhi*, union with godhead". He therefore finally succeeded with the aim of his Abramelin operation – as set out in the grimoire known as *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* – which he had been working on for months.<sup>[80][81]</sup> Because of his spiritual attainment Crowley came to believe that he could finally enter into conversation with his Holy Guardian Angel, and as a result of this, on 30 October 1907 penned "Liber VII", a text that he again claimed to have been dictated to him by Aiwass through automatic writing. Following *The Book of the Law*, which had been received in 1904, "Liber VII" would prove to be the second book in a series of Holy Books of Thelema. Over the next few days, he also received a further Holy Book, "Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente".<sup>[82]</sup>

Soon, Crowley, Jones and J.F.C. Fuller decided to found a new magical order as a successor to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which would be known as the A.:A.:, the Argenteum Astrum or the Silver Star.<sup>[83]</sup> Following the order's foundation, Crowley continued to write down more received Thelemic Holy Books during the last two months of the year, including "Liber LXVI", "Liber Arcanorum", "Liber Porta Lucis, Sub Figura X", "Liber Tau", "Liber Trigrammaton" and "Liber DCCCXIII vel Ararita".<sup>[84]</sup> Meanwhile, effectively separated from his wife Rose by this point, Crowley entered into a romantic and sexual affair with Ada Levenson (1862–1933), an author and friend of Oscar Wilde.<sup>[85]</sup> This affair was brief, and in February 1908, Crowley was reunited with his wife as she had overcome her alcoholism, and together the couple travelled to Eastbourne for a holiday. Rose however relapsed and Crowley, who disliked her when drunk, fled to Paris.<sup>[86]</sup>

In Paris during October 1908, he claimed to have again produced *samadhi* by the use of ritual but this time without hashish. He published an account of this success in order to show that his method worked and that one could achieve great mystical results without living as a hermit. On 30 December 1908, Aleister Crowley using the pseudonym Oliver Haddo made accusations of plagiarism against Somerset Maugham, author of the novel *The Magician*. Crowley's article appeared in *Vanity Fair*, edited then by Frank Harris who admired Crowley and who would later write the famous work *My Life and Loves*. Admittedly, Maugham did model the character of his magician Oliver Haddo after Crowley himself and Crowley stated that Maugham acquiesced privately on the question of plagiarism.<sup>[87]</sup>

In 1909, when doctors stated that Rose required institutionalisation for her alcoholism, Crowley finally decided that it was time to get a divorce, but because he didn't want the proceedings to reflect badly upon her, he agreed that she

could divorce him for infidelity, thereby meaning that any bad appearances would instead be reflected upon him, and he remained her friend following the proceedings.<sup>[88]</sup> Crowley soon moved on and took a woman named Leila Waddell as his lover or "Scarlet Woman".<sup>[89]</sup>

Trying to gain more members for his A.:A.:, Crowley decided to begin publishing a biannual journal, *The Equinox*, which was billed as "The Review of Scientific Illuminism". Starting with a first issue in 1909, *The Equinox* contained pieces by Crowley, Fuller and a young poet Crowley had met in 1907 named Victor Neuburg.<sup>[90]</sup> Soon other occultists had joined the order, including solicitor Richard Noel Warren, artist Austin Osman Spare, Horace Sheridan-Bickers, author George Raffalovich, Francis Henry Everard Joseph Fielding, engineer Herbert Edward Inman, Kenneth Ward and Charles Stansfeld Jones.<sup>[91]</sup> In 1910, Crowley performed his series of dramatic rites, the Rites of Eleusis, with A.:A.: members Leila Waddell (Laylah) and Victor Benjamin Neuburg.

### Ordo Templi Orientis: 1912–1913

According to Crowley, Theodor Reuss called on him in 1912 to accuse him of publishing O.T.O. secrets, which Crowley dismissed on the grounds of having never attained the grade in which these secrets were given (IXth Degree). Reuss opened up Crowley's latest book, *The Book of Lies*, and showed Crowley the passage. This sparked a long conversation which led to Crowley assuming the Xth Degree of O.T.O. and becoming Grand Master of the English-speaking section of O.T.O. called *Mysteria Mystica Maxima*.<sup>[92]</sup>

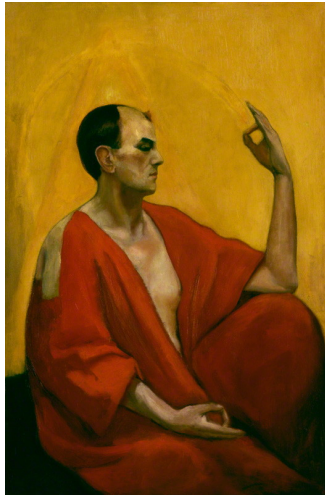
Crowley would eventually introduce the practice of male homosexual sex magick into O.T.O. as one of the highest degrees of the Order.<sup>[93]</sup>

In March 1913, producer Crowley introduced Leila Waddell in *The Ragged Ragtime Girls* follies review at the Old Tivoli in London where it enjoyed a brief run. In July 1913, the production enjoyed a six-week run in Moscow where Crowley met a young Hungarian girl named Anny Ringler. Crowley went on to practice sado-masochistic sex with Ringler. While in Moscow, Crowley would see Anny for an hour and then he would write poetry. During this summer in Moscow, Crowley would write two of his most memorable works, the *Hymn to Pan* and the Gnostic Mass or *Ecclesiae Gnosticae Catholicae Canon Missae*. The *Hymn to Pan* would be read at his funeral thirty four years later and the Gnostic Mass is still regularly performed by OTO.<sup>[94]</sup>

Upon returning to London in the autumn of 1913, Crowley published the tenth and final number of volume one of *The Equinox*. In December 1913 in Paris, Crowley would engage Victor Benjamin Neuburg in *The Paris Working*. The first ritual took place on New Year's Eve 1914. In a period of seven weeks, Crowley and Neuburg performed a total of twenty four rituals which they recorded in the 'holy' or partially holy book formally entitled *Opus Lutetianum*.<sup>[95]</sup> Around eight months later Neuburg had a nervous breakdown. Afterward, Crowley and Neuburg would never see each other again.<sup>[96]</sup>

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Crowley as "Master Therion", oil painting by Leon Engers Kennedy, 1917-1918

## United States and Canada: 1914-1918

During his time in the U.S., Crowley practised the task of a Magister Templi in the A.:A.: as he conceived it, namely interpreting every phenomenon as a particular dealing of "God" with his soul.<sup>[97]</sup> He began to see various women he met as officers in his ongoing initiation, associating them with priests wearing animal masks in Egyptian ritual.<sup>[98]</sup> A meditation during his relationship with one of these women, the poet Jeanne Robert Foster, led him to claim the title of Magus, also referring to the system of the A.:A.:.

In June 1915, Crowley met Jeanne Robert Foster in the company of her friend Hellen Hollis, a journalist; Crowley would have affairs with both women. Foster was a famous New York fashion model, journalist, editor, poet and married. Crowley's plan with Foster was to produce his first son; but in spite of a series of magical operations she did not get pregnant. By the end of 1915, the affair would be over.<sup>[99]</sup> During a trip to Vancouver in 1915, Crowley met Wilfred Smith, Frater 132 of the Vancouver Lodge of O.T.O., and in 1930 granted him permission to establish Agape Lodge in Southern California.<sup>[100]</sup> During the

same trip in 1915, Crowley stopped over at Parke Davis in Detroit for some mescaline.<sup>[101]</sup>

In early 1916, Crowley had an illicit liaison with Alice Richardson, the wife of Ananda Coomaraswamy, one of the greatest art historians of the day. On the stage, Richardson was known as Ratan Devi, mezzo-soprano interpreter of East Indian music. Richardson became pregnant but on a voyage back to England, in mid-1916, she had a miscarriage. Just before his affair with Ratan Devi, Crowley was practising sex magick with Gerda Maria von Kothek, a German prostitute.<sup>[102]</sup>

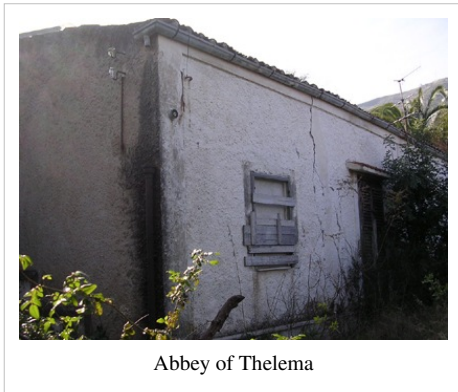
Two periods of magical experimentation followed. In June 1916, he began the first of these at the New Hampshire cottage of Evangeline Adams, having ghostwritten most of her two books on astrology.<sup>[103]</sup> His diaries at first show discontent at the gap between his view of the grade of Magus and his view of himself: "It is no good making up my mind to do anything material; for I have no means. But this would vanish if I could make up my mind." Despite his objections to sacrificing a living animal, he resolved to crucify a frog as part of a rehearsal of the life of Jesus in the Gospels (afterward declaring it his willing familiar), "with the idea ... that some supreme violation of all the laws of my being would break down my Karma or dissolve the spell that seems to bind me".<sup>[104]</sup> Slightly more than a month later, having taken ether (ethyl oxide), he had a vision of the universe from a modern scientific cosmology that he frequently referred to in later writings.<sup>[105]</sup>

Crowley began another period of magical work on an island in the Hudson River after buying large amounts of red paint instead of food. Having painted "Do what thou wilt" on the cliffs at both sides of the island, he received gifts from curious visitors. Here at the island he had visions of seeming past lives, though he refused to endorse any theory of what they meant beyond linking them to his unconscious. Towards the end of his stay, he had a shocking experience he linked to "the Chinese wisdom" which made even Thelema appear insignificant.<sup>[106]</sup> Nevertheless, he continued in his work. Before leaving the country he formed a sexual and magical relationship with Leah Hirsig, whom he had met earlier, and with her help began painting canvases with more creativity and passion.<sup>[107]</sup>

Richard B. Spence writes in his 2008 book *Secret Agent 666: Aleister Crowley, British Intelligence and the Occult* that Crowley could have been a lifelong agent for British Intelligence. While this may have already been the case during his many travels to Tsarist Russia, Switzerland, Asia, Mexico and North Africa that had started in his student days, he could have been involved with this line of work during his life in America during the First World War, under a cover of being a German propaganda agent and a supporter of Irish independence. Crowley's mission might have been to gather information about the German intelligence network, the Irish independent activists and produce

aberrant propaganda, aiming at compromising the German and Irish ideals. As an agent provocateur he could have played some role in provoking the sinking of the RMS *Lusitania*, thereby bringing the United States closer to active involvement in the war alongside the Allies.<sup>[108]</sup> He also used German magazines *The Fatherland* and *The International* as outlets for his other writings. The question of whether Crowley was a spy has always been subject to debate, but Spence uncovered a document from the US Army's old Military Intelligence Division supporting Crowley's own claim to having been a spy:

Aleister Crowley was an employee of the British Government ... in this country on official business of which the British Consul, New York City has full cognizance.<sup>[109]</sup>



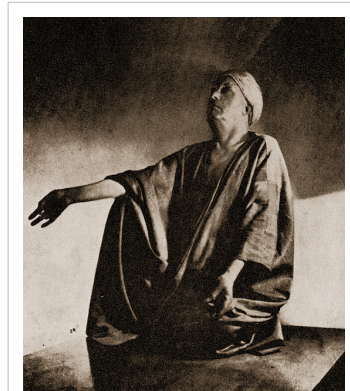
Abbey of Thelema

### Abbey of Thelema: 1920–1923

Soon after moving from West 9th St. in Greenwich Village, New York City, to Palermo, Sicily with their newborn daughter Anne Leah (nicknamed Poupée, born February 1920, died in a hospital in Palermo 14 October 1920), Crowley, along with Leah Hirsig, founded the Abbey of Thelema in Cefalù (Palermo) on 14 April 1920, the day the lease for the villa Santa Barbara was signed by Sir Alastor de Kerval (Crowley) and Contessa Lea Harcourt (Leah Hirsig). The Crowleys arrived in Cefalu on 1 April 1920.<sup>[110]</sup>

During their stay at the abbey Hirsig was known as Soror Alostrael, Crowley's Scarlet Woman, the name Crowley used for his female sex magick practitioners in reference to the consort of the Beast of the Apocalypse whose number is 666.<sup>[111]</sup> The name of the abbey was borrowed from Rabelais's epic *Gargantua*,<sup>[112]</sup> where the "Abbey of Thélème" is described as a sort of anti-monastery where the lives of the inhabitants were "spent not in laws, statutes, or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure".<sup>[113]</sup> This idealistic utopia was to be the model of Crowley's commune, while also being a type of magical school, giving it the designation "Collegium ad Spiritum Sanctum", The College of the Holy Spirit. The general programme was in line with the A.∴A.∴ course of training, and included daily adorations to the Sun, a study of Crowley's writings, regular yogic and ritual practices (which were to be recorded), as well as general domestic labour. The object, naturally, was for students to devote themselves to the Great Work of discovering and manifesting their True Wills.

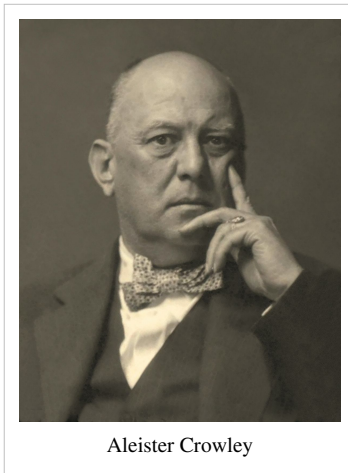
Two women, Hirsig and Shumway (her magical name was Sister Cypris after Aphrodite), were both carrying Crowley's seed. Hirsig had a two-year old son named Hansi and Shumway had a three-year old boy named Howard; they were not Crowley's but he nicknamed them Dionysus and Hermes respectively. After Poupée died, Hirsig had a miscarriage but Shumway gave birth to a daughter, Astarte Lulu Panthea. Hirsig suspected Shumway's black magic foul play and what Crowley found when reading Shumway's magical diary (everybody had to keep one while at the abbey for reasons explained in Liber E) appalled him. Shumway was banished from the abbey and the Beast lamented the death of his children. However, Shumway was soon back in the abbey again to take care of her offspring.<sup>[114]</sup>



Crowley in meditation

Mussolini's Fascist government expelled Crowley from the country at the end of April 1923.

## Later life



Aleister Crowley

### After the abbey: 1923–1947

In February 1924, Crowley visited Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. He did not meet the founder on that occasion, but called Gurdjieff a "tip-top man" in his diary.<sup>[115]</sup> Crowley privately criticised some of the Institute's practices and teachings, but doubted that what he heard from disciple Pindar reflected the master's true position. Some claim that on a later visit he met Gurdjieff—who firmly repudiated Crowley.<sup>[116]</sup> Biographer Sutin expresses scepticism,<sup>[117]</sup> and Gurdjieff's student C.S. Nott tells a different version. Nott perceives Crowley as a black or at least ignorant magician and says his teacher "kept a sharp watch" on the visitor, but mentions no open confrontation.<sup>[118]</sup>

On 16 August 1929, Crowley married Maria de Miramar, a Nicaraguan, while in Leipzig. They separated by 1930, but were never divorced.<sup>[119]</sup> In July 1931, de Miramar was admitted to the Colney Hatch Mental Hospital in New Southgate where she remained until her death thirty years later.<sup>[120]</sup>

In September 1930, Crowley was in Lisbon to meet the poet Fernando Pessoa, who translated his poem "Hymn To Pan" into Portuguese. With the assistance of Pessoa Crowley faked his own death at a notorious rock formation on the shore called Boca do Inferno (Mouth of Hell). Crowley then left the country and enjoyed the newspaper reports of his death, and reappeared three weeks later at an exhibition in Berlin.<sup>[121]</sup>

### Bankruptcy

In 1934, Crowley was declared bankrupt after losing a court case in which he sued the artist Nina Hamnett for calling him a black magician in her 1932 book, *Laughing Torso*. In addressing the court Mr. Justice Swift said:

I have been over forty years engaged in the administration of the law in one capacity or another. I thought that I knew of every conceivable form of wickedness. I thought that everything which was vicious and bad had been produced at one time or another before me. I have learnt in this case that we can always learn something more if we live long enough. I have never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous and abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man (Crowley) who describes himself to you as the greatest living poet.

—Mr. Justice Swift

Patricia "Deirdre" MacAlpine approached Crowley on the day of the verdict and offered to bear him a child, whom he named Aleister Atatürk. She sought no mystical or religious role in Crowley's life and rarely saw him after the birth, "an arrangement that suited them both".<sup>[122]</sup>

In March 1939, Dion Fortune and Aleister Crowley met publicly for the first time. Fortune had already used Crowley as a model for the black magician Hugo Astley in her 1935 novel *The Winged Bull*.<sup>[123]</sup>

During the Second World War, future James Bond author Ian Fleming (then a Navy intelligence officer) along with other colleagues proposed a disinformation plot in which Crowley would have helped an MI5 agent supply Nazi official Rudolf Hess with faked horoscopes. They could then pass along false information about an alleged pro-German circle in Britain. The government abandoned this plan when Hess flew to Scotland, crashing his plane on the moors near Eaglesham, and was captured. Fleming then suggested using Crowley as an interrogator to determine the influence of astrology on other Nazi leaders, but his superiors rejected this plan. At some point, Fleming also suggested that Britain could use Enochian as a code in order to plant evidence.<sup>[124]</sup>

On 21 March 1944, Crowley undertook what he considered his crowning achievement, the publication of *The Book of Thoth*, "strictly limited to 200 numbered and signed copies bound in Morocco leather and printed on pre-war-time

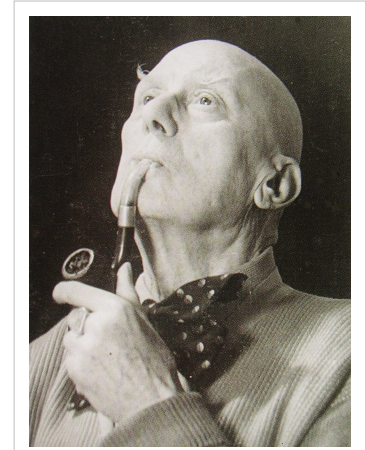
paper". Crowley sold £1,500 worth of the edition in less than three months.<sup>[125]</sup>

In April 1944, Crowley moved from 93 Jermyn St. to Bell Inn at Aston Clinton, Bucks. Daphne Harris was the landlady.<sup>[126]</sup>

## Death

In January 1945, Crowley moved to Netherwood, a Hastings boarding house where in the first three months he was visited twice by Dion Fortune; she died of leukaemia in January 1946. On 14 March 1945, in a letter Fortune wrote to Crowley, she declares: "... The acknowledgement I made in the introduction of *The Mystical Qabalah* of my indebtedness to your work, which seemed to me to be no more than common literary honesty, has been used as a rod for my back by people who look on you as Antichrist".<sup>[127]</sup>

Crowley died at Netherwood on 1 December 1947 at the age of 72. According to one biographer the cause of death was a respiratory infection.<sup>[128]</sup> He had become addicted to heroin after being prescribed morphine for his asthma and bronchitis many years earlier.<sup>[129]</sup> He and his last doctor died within 24 hours of each other; newspapers would claim, in differing accounts, that Dr. Thomson had refused to continue his opiate prescription and that Crowley had put a curse on him.<sup>[130]</sup>



Crowley shortly before his death

Biographer Lawrence Sutin passes on various stories about Crowley's death and last words. Frieda Harris supposedly reported him saying, "I am perplexed", though she did not see him at the very end. According to John Symonds, a Mr. Rowe witnessed Crowley's death along with a nurse, and reported his last words as "Sometimes I hate myself". Biographer Gerald Suster accepted the version of events he received from a "Mr W.H." who worked at the house, in which Crowley dies pacing in his living room.<sup>[128]</sup> Supposedly Mr W.H. heard a crash while polishing furniture on the floor below, and entered Crowley's rooms to find him dead on the floor.

Patricia "Deirdre" MacAlpine, who visited Crowley with their son and her three other children, denied all this and reports a sudden gust of wind and peal of thunder at the (otherwise quiet) moment of his death. According to MacAlpine, Crowley remained bedridden for the last few days of his life, but was in light spirits and conversational. Readings at the cremation service in nearby Brighton included excerpts from Crowley's works, among them his poem *Hymn to Pan*, and newspapers referred to the service as a Black Mass. The Brighton council subsequently resolved to take all the necessary steps to prevent such an incident from occurring again.<sup>[128]</sup>

## Beliefs

### Freemasonry

Crowley claimed to be a Freemason,<sup>[131]</sup> but the organisations he joined are not considered regular by Masonic bodies in the Anglo-American tradition.<sup>[132]</sup>

### Science and magic

Crowley has been labelled by some anthropologists as a practitioner of neoshamanism and revivalist of shamanistic philosophies in the early 20th century.<sup>[133]</sup>

### Controversy

Crowley enjoyed being a figure of controversy and frequently deliberately provoked it among his peers and in the media. Author and Crowley expert Lon Milo Duquette wrote in his 1993 work *The Magick of Aleister Crowley* that:

Crowley clothed many of his teachings in the thin veil of sensational titillation. By doing so he assured himself that one, his works would only be appreciated by the few individuals capable of doing so, and two, his works would continue to generate interest and be published by and for the benefit of both his admirers and his enemies long after death. He did not—I repeat—did not perform or advocate human sacrifice. He was often guilty, however, of the crime of poor judgment.

Like all of us, Crowley had many flaws and shortcomings. The greatest of those, in my opinion, was his inability to understand that everyone else in the world was not as educated and clever as he. It is clear, even in his earliest works, he often took fiendish delight in terrifying those who were either too lazy, too bigoted, or too slow-witted to understand him.<sup>[134]</sup>

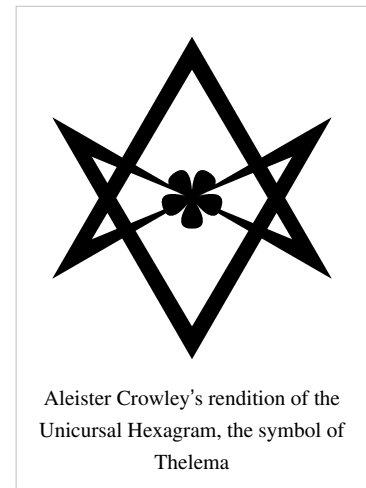
### Spiritual and recreational use of drugs

Crowley was a habitual drug user and also maintained a meticulous record of his drug-induced experiences with opium, cocaine, hashish, cannabis, alcohol, ether, mescaline, morphine, and heroin.<sup>[135]</sup> Allan Bennett, Crowley's mentor, was said to have "instructed Crowley in the magical use of drugs".<sup>[136]</sup>

In October 1930, Crowley dined with Aldous Huxley in Berlin, and to this day rumours persist that he introduced Huxley to peyote on that occasion.<sup>[137]</sup>

### Other drug use

Crowley developed a drug addiction after a London doctor prescribed heroin for his asthma and bronchitis.<sup>[138]</sup> His life as an addict influenced his 1922 novel, *Diary of a Drug Fiend*, but the fiction presented a hopeful outcome of rehabilitation and recovery by means of magical techniques and the exercise of True Will. He overcame his addiction to heroin during this period (chronicled in *Liber XVIII – The Fountain of Hyacinth*) but began taking it once more late in his life, again on doctor's prescription for his respiratory difficulties.<sup>[139]</sup>



## Racism

Biographer Lawrence Sutin stated that "blatant bigotry is a persistent minor element in Crowley's writings".<sup>[140]</sup> He also calls Crowley "a spoiled scion of a wealthy Victorian family who embodied many of the worst John Bull racial and social prejudices of his upper-class contemporaries",<sup>[141]</sup> noting that, "Crowley embodied the contradiction that writhed within many Western intellectuals of the time: deeply held racist viewpoints courtesy of their culture, coupled with a fascination with people of colour".<sup>[142]</sup>

Crowley's published expressions of anti-semitism were disturbing enough to later editors of his works that one of them, Israel Regardie, who had also been a student of Crowley, attempted to suppress them. In *777 and Other Qabalistic Writings of Aleister Crowley* (Samuel Weiser, 1975), Regardie, who was Jewish, explained his complete removal of Crowley's anti-semitic commentary on the Kabbalah in the sixth unnumbered page of his editorial introduction: "I am ... omitting Crowley's Preface to the book. It is a nasty, malicious piece of writing, and does not do justice to the system with which he is dealing."<sup>[143]</sup> What Regardie had removed was Crowley's "Preface to Sepher Sephiroth", originally published in *Equinox 1:8*. Written in 1911,<sup>[144]</sup> which contained a statement of Crowley's belief in the blood libel against the Jews:

Human sacrifices are today still practised by the Jews of Eastern Europe, as is set forth at length by Sir Richard Burton in the MS which the wealthy Jews of England have compassed heaven and earth to suppress,<sup>[145]</sup> and evidenced by the ever-recurring Pogroms against which so senseless an outcry is made by those who live among those degenerate Jews who are at least not cannibals.<sup>[146]</sup>

Crowley rhetorically asked how a system of value such as Qabalah could come from what "the general position of the ethnologist" called "an entirely barbarous race, devoid of any spiritual pursuit", and "polytheists" to boot.<sup>[146]</sup> As Crowley himself practised polytheism, some read these remarks as deliberate irony.<sup>[147]</sup>

Crowley studied and promoted the mystical and magical teachings of some of the same ethnic groups he attacked, in particular Indian yoga, Jewish Kabbalah and goetia, and the Chinese I Ching. Also, in *Confessions* Chapter 86,<sup>[148]</sup> as well as a private diary which Lawrence Sutin quotes in *Do What Thou Wilt* chapter 7, Crowley recorded a memory of a "past life" as the Chinese Taoist writer Ko Hsuan. In another remembered life, Crowley said, he took part in a "Council of Masters" that included many from Asia.

In private comments on *Mein Kampf*, Crowley said that his own preferred "master class" was above all distinctions of race.<sup>[149]</sup>

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## Views on women

Biographer Lawrence Sutin stated that Crowley "largely accepted the notion, implicitly embodied in Victorian sexology, of women as secondary social beings in terms of intellect and sensibility".<sup>[150]</sup> Another biographer, Martin Booth, while describing Crowley's misogyny, asserts that in other ways he was pro-feminist who thought women were badly served by the law. He considered abortion to be tantamount to murder and thought little of a society that condoned it, believing that women, when left to choose outside of prevailing social influences, would never want to end a pregnancy.<sup>[151]</sup>

When he sought what he called the supreme magical-mystical attainment, Crowley asked Leah Hirsig to direct his ordeals, marking the first time since the schism in the Golden Dawn that another person verifiably took charge of his initiation.<sup>[152]</sup>

## Legacy and influence

Crowley has remained an influential figure, both amongst occultists and in popular culture, particularly that of Britain, but also of other parts of the world.



Leila Waddell (Laylah), Crowley's muse during the writing of *The Book of Lies*

## Occult

After Crowley's death, various of his colleagues and fellow Thelemites continued with his work. One of his British disciples, Kenneth Grant, subsequently founded the Typhonian O.T.O. in the 1950s. In America, his followers also continued, one of the most prominent of whom was Jack Parsons, the influential rocket scientist. Parsons performed what he described as the Babalon Working in 1946, and subsequently claimed to have been taught the fourth part of the *Book of the Law*. Parsons would also later work with and influence L. Ron Hubbard, the later founder of Scientology.

Crowley inspired and influenced a number of later Malvernians including Major-General John Fuller, the inventor of artificial moonlight, and Cecil Williamson, the neo-pagan witch.

One of Crowley's acquaintances in the last months of his life was Gerald Gardner, who was initiated into O.T.O. by Crowley and subsequently went on to found the Neopagan religion of Wicca. Various scholars on early Wiccan history, such as Ronald Hutton, Philip Heselton and Leo Ruickbie concur that witchcraft's early rituals, as devised by Gardner, contained much from Crowley's writings such as the Gnostic Mass.

## Biographers or partial biographers and their links to Crowley or his occult orders

- Jerry Cornelius - the head of the McMurtry Branch of the A.'.A.'.<sup>[153]</sup>
- Lon Milo Duquette - an international governing officer of Ordo Templi Orientis.<sup>[154]</sup>
- Richard Kaczynski - a member of the OTO since 1987, he opened up the annual OTO conference last year.<sup>[155]</sup>
- Francis X. King - vilified on one hand and praised on the other by OTO members after 1973 when he published *The Secret Rituals of the O.T.O.*,<sup>[156]</sup> his biography of Aleister Crowley was published 4 years later.
- Rodney Orpheus - was a deputy National Grand Master General for UK Grand Lodge of O.T.O.<sup>[157]</sup>
- Israel Regardie - a former secretary to Aleister Crowley.<sup>[158]</sup>
- John Symonds - was a friend of Crowley and executor of Crowley's legal Will.<sup>[159]</sup>



## Popular culture

Fictionalised accounts of Crowley or characters based upon him have been included in a number of literary works, published both during his life and after. The writer W. Somerset Maugham used him as the model for the character in his novel *The Magician*, published in 1908.<sup>[60]</sup> Crowley was flattered by Maugham's fictionalised depiction of himself, stating that "he had done more than justice to the qualities of which I was proud... *The Magician* was, in fact, an appreciation of my genius such as I had never dreamed of inspiring."<sup>[160]</sup> Similarly, in Dennis Wheatley's popular thriller *The Devil Rides Out*, the Satanic cult leader Mocata is inspired by Crowley, and in turn the deceased Satanist Adrian Marcato referred to in Ira Levin's *Rosemary's Baby* is likewise a Crowley-like figure. Long after his death Crowley is still being used for similar purposes, appearing as a main character in Robert Anton Wilson's 1981 novel *Masks of the Illuminati* and Jake Arnott's 2009 novel *The Devil's Paintbrush*.

The association of Crowley's name with various Satanic or dark individuals occurs widely in published works, especially those oriented toward a younger but technologically literate demographic target audience. In the cyberpunk novel *Hammerjack* (2005), author Marc D. Giller introduces the "Crowleys" on the second page of that sci-fi thriller, as one of the groups of "street species" inhabiting the cities. The long-running American TV series "Supernatural" also includes two villains named Aleister, and Crowley.

The acclaimed comic book author Alan Moore, himself a practitioner of ceremonial magic, has also included Crowley in several of his works. In Moore's *From Hell*, he appears in a cameo as a young boy declaring that magic is real, while in the series *Promethea* he appears several times existing in a realm of the imagination called the Immaterialia. *V for Vendetta* makes reference to "Do what thou wilt..." on more than one occasion in the comic series. Moore has also discussed Crowley's associations with the Highbury area of London in his recorded magical working, *The Highbury Working*.<sup>[161]</sup> Other comic book writers have also made use of him, with Pat Mills and Olivier Ledroit portraying him as a reincarnated vampire in their series *Requiem Chevalier Vampire*. Crowley also is referenced in the Batman comic *Arkham Asylum: A Serious House on Serious Earth* where the character Amadeus Arkham meets with him, discuss the symbolism of Egyptian tarot, and they play chess. He has also appeared in Japanese media, such as *D.Gray-Man* and *Toaru Majutsu no Index*, as well as the hentai series *Bible Black*, where he has a fictional daughter named Jody Crowley who continues her father's search for the Scarlet Woman. Occult scholar Hiroshi Aramata, author of the groundbreaking historical fantasy novel *Teito Monogatari*, has described the protagonist of his work as a person "closely resembling" Aleister Crowley.<sup>[162]</sup> He is also depicted in the Original PlayStation game *Nightmare Creatures* as a powerful demonic resurrection of himself.<sup>[163]</sup> Ian Fleming used Crowley as a model for Le Chiffre, villain in the first James Bond novel *Casino Royale*.

Crowley has been an influence for a string of popular musicians throughout the 20th century. The hugely popular band The Beatles included him as one of the many figures on the cover sleeve of their 1967 album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, where he is situated between Sri Yukteswar Giri and Mae West. A more intent interest in Crowley was held by Jimmy Page, the guitarist and co-founder of 1970s rock band Led Zeppelin. Despite not describing himself as a Thelemite or being a member of the Ordo Templi Orientis, Page was still fascinated by Crowley, and owned some of his clothing, manuscripts and ritual objects, and during the 1970s bought Boleskine House, which also appears in the band's movie *The Song Remains the Same*. On the back cover of the Doors 13 album, Jim Morrison and the other members of the Doors are shown posing with a bust of Aleister Crowley. Author Paulo Coelho introduced the writings of Aleister Crowley to Brazilian rocker Raul Seixas, who went on to write and perform songs (most notably, "Viva a Sociedade Alternativa" and "Novo Aeon") that were strongly influenced by Crowley.<sup>[164]</sup> The later rock musician Ozzy Osbourne released a song titled "Mr. Crowley" on his solo album *Blizzard of Ozz*, while a comparison of Crowley and Osbourne in the context of their media portrayals can be found in the *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture*.<sup>[165]</sup> Crowley has also been a favourite of Swiss Avant-Garde metal band Celtic Frost. In fact, the song *Os Abysmi Vel Daath* from *Monotheist* is based partially on some of his writings. In the early 1990s, British Indie band Five Thirty carried with them on tour a front door which they alleged had belonged to Crowley. The door was placed prominently on stage during their gigs.<sup>[166]</sup>

Crowley has also had an influence in cinema. Photographs showing him on-set now in the Princeton University library confirm Crowley was hired in 1916 by Theodore and Leo Wharton, early filmmakers with a studio in Ithaca, New York, as a consultant on their film serial "The Mysteries of Myra" which featured a Crowley-like figure as the serial's occult-magician villain, initially depicted in a near-exact duplicate of a "Golden Dawn" costume including black triangular hat with golden triangle symbol. In the film series, members of the "Master's" cult perform occult rituals and spells wearing the triangle symbol and identify themselves to each other with the "thumbs-up" gesture depicted in the photograph attached to the top of this article. Crowley was also a major influence and inspiration to the work on the radical avant garde underground film-maker Kenneth Anger, especially his Magick Lantern Cycle series of works. One of Anger's works is a film of Crowley's paintings,<sup>[167]</sup> and in 2009 he gave a lecture on the subject of Crowley.<sup>[168]</sup> Bruce Dickinson, singer with Iron Maiden, wrote the screenplay of *Chemical Wedding* (released in America on DVD as *Crowley*),<sup>[169]</sup> which features Simon Callow as Oliver Haddo, the name taken from the Magician-villain character in the Somerset Maugham book "The Magician", who was in turn inspired by Maugham's meeting with Crowley<sup>[170]</sup> He also appeared as himself in the animated television show *The Venture Bros* in the season three episode entitled "Orb."

The Italian historian of esotericism Giordano Berti, in his book *Tarocchi di Aleister Crowley* (1998) quotes a number of literary works and films inspired by Crowley's life and legends. Some of the films are *The Magician* (1926) by Rex Ingram, based upon the eponymous book written by William Somerset Maugham (1908); *Night of the Demon* (1957) by Jacques Tourneur, based on the story "Casting the Runes" by M. R. James; and *The Devils Rides Out* (1968) by Terence Fisher, from the eponymous thriller by Dennis Wheatley. Also: "Dance To The Music of Time" by Anthony Powell, "Black Easter" by James Blish, and "The Winged Bull" by Dion Fortune.<sup>[171]</sup>

## References

### Footnotes

- [1] Symonds 1997. p. vii.
- [2] Churton 2011. p. 3.
- [3] Kaczynski 2010, Acknowledgments
- [4] Sutin 2000. p. 207.
- [5] Sutin 2000. p. 15.
- [6] Kaczynski 2010. p. 14.
- [7] Kaczynski 2010. pp. 04–08.
- [8] Churton 2011. pp. 14–15.
- [9] Sutin 2000. pp. 18–21.
- [10] Churton 2011. pp. 17–21.
- [11] Churton 2011. p. 17.
- [12] Sutin 2000. pp. 17–23.
- [13] Kaczynski 2010. pp. 11–12, 16.
- [14] Churton 2011. p. 24.
- [15] Kaczynski 2010. p. 19.
- [16] Churton 2011. pp. 24–25.
- [17] Sutin 2000. p. 21.
- [18] Sutin 2000. pp. 27–32.
- [19] Sutin 2000. pp. 32–33.
- [20] Kaczynski 2010. p. 27.
- [21] Churton 2011. pp. 26–27.
- [22] Sutin 2000. pp. 25–26.
- [23] Kaczynski 2010. p. 23.
- [24] Kaczynski 2010. pp. 24, 27.
- [25] Churton 2011. p. 27.
- [26] Crowley 1989. p.139.
- [27] Crowley 1989. p. 108.
- [28] Booth 2000. p. 49.

- [29] Churton 2011. pp. 27–28.
- [30] Symonds 1997. p. 13.
- [31] Symonds 1997. pp. 14–15.
- [32] Symonds 1997. p. 15.
- [33] Sutin 2000. p. 46.
- [34] Sutin 2000. pp. 36–37.
- [35] Symonds 1997. p. 14.
- [36] Churton 2011. p. 29.
- [37] Sutin 2000. p. 38.
- [38] Booth 2000. p. 5.
- [39] Sutin 2000. pp. 41–47.
- [40] Churton 2011. pp. 33–24.
- [41] Sutin 2000. p. 47.
- [42] Sutin 2000. pp. 37–39.
- [43] Sutin 2000. pp. 35–36.
- [44] Spence 2006.
- [45] Churton 2011. pp. 30–31.
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## External links

- Aleister Crowley Collection (<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/research/fa/lfcrowley.html>) at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin
- The Libri of Aleister Crowley (<http://hermetic.com/crowley>) Many of the writings of Crowley have been published for free online.

# Article Sources and Contributors

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